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DISPATCH NO. 80MA-13150

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TO Chief, EE

DATE: 10 Nov 1954

FROM Chief of Mission, Frankfurt *mr*

INFO: SE
COM

SUBJECT: GENERAL— Operational/CART/

SPECIFIC— "European Friendship Circles"

Attached is a report by (Source 300) on the appearance of a new initiative entitled the "European Friendship Circles" (EF). (C) and (C) are somewhat stunned by the appearance of this enterprise in that it has virtually the same objectives as their carefully nurtured East European Movement for a United Europe. (C) interprets the presence of Professor Hans ROCH, of the Osteuropa Institut, and especially that of (Fnu) SCHENK whom he assumes to be Walter von SCHENK, Gerhard von HENDE's deputy, to mean that this initiative has German financial backing. (C) is prone to the conclusion that in view of the inability of the East European Movement for a United Europe to secure financial support, this new initiative will soon preempt the role they had hoped their East European Movement would play. He and (C) are a little bitter about what they now see as NCPE shortsightedness in refusing to subsidize them.

Report No. 12-10-54

9 November 1954

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FORM NO. 51-28A
MAY 1953

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

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Encl to EGGA-13150

28 October 1954

Subject : European Friendship Circles (EF)

Date of Information : 9 October 1954

Source : 300 direct

1. In early October 1954 invitations to a meeting of the "European Friendship Circles" (EF) in Munich were sent to a number of East-European emigrants. The following organizations signed as the inviting party:
 - a. "Supra-national YECA/YUCA Association in Germany"; signed by Dr. Anton GRABER.
 - b. Association of Free Press; signed by Dr. Zoltan MAKRA.
2. The invitations were accompanied by a letter in which the initiators outlined the aims and missions of the "EF": "To broaden our knowledge and to strengthen our conviction in efforts for the achievement of a united Europe". According to the initiators it is also intended to propagate, widen and strengthen the European unity idea in circles of East-European expellees, who have found asylum in the Federal Republic, at a moment when the European idea has suffered a drawback. Without interfering with the efforts of the various European governments to achieve European unification, as it were "from above", it is planned to make similar efforts, "from below", by forming "European Friendship Circles" in the major cities of the Federal Republic. These circles will not consist of representatives of national groups but of individual persons of all nationalities. By arranging discussions, meetings, conferences in Germany or abroad a contribution to European unification will be made.
3. The meeting on 9 October 1954 was attended by approximately 50 - 60 persons. The major portion of these appeared to be Hungarians. There were also Germans, Croatians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Czechoslovakians, however, no Russians or Poles. Prominent among those attending were:
 - a. (Professor) Ferdinand DUCHAKSKY, ABW;
 - b. General Andrei ZAKO, LHBK;
 - c. Vladimir PEKELSKY, TDF;
 - d. H. WISCHLER, European Union for Bavaria;
 - e. Dimitro ANDRIEVSKIY, UNR, etc.

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Professor Hans KOCK, director of the Osteuropa Institut, Munich, was in the chair and presided over the discussion. (Dr. Victor VONASTENKOVIC, editor of the monthly bulletin "Eastern Europe's Tribune", gave a lecture entitled "We and Europe - We Europeans". The lecture was general in scope and contained no new points. In the discussion which followed the lecture the participants voiced various recommendations for achieving European unity. The atmosphere was notably free of those tensions which usually characterize East-European meetings. Many of the participants lauded the initiative and idea of the meeting but were unanimous in appealing for more concrete information and precisely what concrete steps would be taken by the EF in the future. This information was not forthcoming from the initiators of the EF. Even Dr. GRABER in concluding the meeting did not indicate what further steps were contemplated. He merely recommended that the participants continue to discuss the problem among themselves. Costs of the meeting were estimated at approximately 200 DM.

- (1) Source comment: Source noted that a person unknown to him, who was however addressed as Mr. SCHEIK, was treated with great respect and attention by Dr. KARKA, Dr. GRABER, Prof. DURCHANSKY, etc. It is presumed that this person is Gerhard von MENDE's deputy, von SCHEIK. SCHEIK avoided calling attention to himself but Source gained the impression that SCHEIK was the central figure in this initiative.

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Early in Nov. the Association of the Free Press will hold its annual gene. meeting and elect a new executive committee (for background see my Memo of Dec 6, 54).

The present executive committee has the following members:

Dr. E. Makra, President; *The Association of the Free Press*
Mr. T. Noeff, 1st Vice-President;
Mr. G. Kotorowicz, 2nd Vice-President;
Mr. P. Kovalevskis, 3rd Vice-President;
Mr. Greiner, Secretary General;
Mr. W. Benaitis, Cashier.

This committee was elected in November 53. In March 54 Mr. Makra succeeded in receiving financial support from Prof. von Mende's office. The monthly subsidy of DM 1000.- was earmarked for the publication of an information and news bulletin "Presse Korrespondenz". At the same time Mr. Makra was told that he could use part of the money for administrative expenses of the Association (rent, telephone and other office expenses). Until the end of the calendar year 54, the Press Association received a total of DM 8000.- which was used up by January 1, 1955. During January 55 no money was transferred from Düsseldorf and consequently the "Presse Korrespondenz" could not be published. Even the rent for the office in Munich was not paid on time.

Because of this alarming situation Mr. Makra went to Bonn and Düsseldorf for he had promised his executive committee during a rather turbulent session to get the monthly support. When he came back last week he had no money, but a very clear "order" from the Düsseldorf bureau. He was told that support would be continued only if no personnel changes would take place in the new executive committee and if no "undesirable persons" would be elected as officers. At the same time the planned trip of 25 to 30 members of the Association to Bonn, which was originally scheduled for January 55, was postponed until after the election. For this special project Prof. von Mende's office had approved between 2000 and 3000 DM.

In view of this "mild pressure" Mr. Makra's position as Chairman has become precarious. Already during the last meeting of the

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executive committee at the middle of January he was attacked by several members because of his "dictatorial" way to handle things. The discussion started when Mr. Herak, a member of Mr. Pekelsky's group, requested information concerning the so-called European Friendship Circles, a Düsseldorf sponsored project of Mr. Graber's YMCA and the Press Association. Dr. Makra had joined this project without clearance from his executive committee and even without informing it. In the course of the debate Makra was violently attacked by several officers including Mr. Penoff from the Bulgarian committee, Dr. Dumitrescu the former Chairman of the Association, and Mr. W. Benaitis.

Although the future existence of the Association depends entirely on financial support from Düsseldorf, Mr. Makra's originally strong position has weakened considerably. There is no money in the cashbox, the "Freie Presse Korrespondenz" has ceased publication, the trip of the journalists to Bonn has been postponed, with other words Makra cannot step before the general assembly with a report of success. Worse than that he is under pressure, a fact which is already known to the other members of the executive committee. So far the officers of the Association have always tried to avoid a reputation as being completely dependent on German support. This assertion cannot be maintained any longer after Mr. Makra has been told the conditions under which Düsseldorf will cooperate with the Association.

Despite these facts Mr. Makra probably will be re-elected because of two reasons: 1) the Association is bankrupt and has no other choice than the Düsseldorf subsidy; 2) there is no other candidate for the presidency besides Dr. Dumitrescu who even does not have the votes of his own Rumanian group.

The biggest group, the Ukrainians, do not want to nominate a candidate. All they want is to be represented through a Vice-President. They are, however, determined to control Dr. Makra's activities in the future more closely. The Baltic group represented by the Vice-President Mr. Kovalevskis is also not interested in the presidency.

The most probable solution will be a new executive committee with Dr. Makra as Chairman and two Vice-Presidents, who will request from the general assembly authority to control the President's work.